

HOME SERVICE

FOR THE

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PASSOVER

RABBI J. LEONARD LEVY, D. D.

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HAGGADAH

OR

HOME SERVICE

FOR THE FESTIVAL OF

PASSOVER

By

RABBI J. LEONARD LEVY, D. D.

OF THE CONGREGATION RODEPH SHALOM

PITTSBURG, PA.

SECOND EDITION

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CHARLES H. JOSEPH

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PREFACE.

This "Home Service for the Passover" is a very humble attempt to adapt the old form of Service to modern use. In so many homes there are few, if any, who can read the Haggadah in Hebrew. Much of the English translation of the old Haggadah is scarcely adapted to present-day life and thought. We have endeavored to arrange a short service embodying the themes of the Haggadah and giving to them a modern dressing.

The first edition of this book being completely sold out, we have, owing to the encouragement given us by those who used it, issued a second edition, somewhat simplified and revised. We trust it may serve the purpose of increasing interest in one of the most valuable of domestic religious helps.

J. LEONARD LEVY.

Pittsburgh, Pa., 1903.

INSTRUCTIONS.

The family should assemble around a table, in the center of which there should be placed an American flag, some unleavened bread, a few flowers, a glass of wine and some lighted candles. Some bitter herbs and a small quantity of 'Haroseth*' are also needed. Each of these symbols, which are purely arbitrary, will be explained subsequently. A wine glass should be placed before each of those present, as on four different occasions, appropriate sentiments will be pledged. This being intended for family use, to be read by father or mother to a small congregation consisting of their children and possibly also of invited guests, the use of the terms Reader and Child will be readily understood.

*A mixture of apples, almonds, cinnamon and sweet wine.

HOME SERVICE FOR THE PASSOVER

OPENING PRAYER.

(All present recite the following:)

O Lord our God, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth! We adore Thee and worship Thee, we extol and we love Thee, Source of all life. Thou alone art our God; Thou alone art our Savior, and beside Thee there is none. At Thy altar, all Thy children do swear fealty and bow in reverence. Guard us in Thy love. Guide us in Thy path. May we prove our love for Thee, O Father of all, by our love for Thy children, our fellowmen. May we show unto others the consideration we seek for ourselves. May we overcome temptation and keep the law of righteousness. May our joys and sorrows become messengers of grace to lead us unto Thee. May we deal with our fellowmen as Thou dealest with us. Help us to receive our portion in life gratefully, and through all the chances and changes of our existence may we be able to say: Thy ways are just; for Thou art a God of love and Thy kingdom endures forever. As Thou hast been with us in the past, so continue to be in the future, O God, the Father of all, Amen.

HAGGADAH.

(The Reader, taking a glass of wine in his hand, then says:)

We are gathered to-night ~~within the home-~~temple in honor of our holy religion and of our great and eventful history. We cannot help feeling grateful that although another year has passed, we are still spared to one another. We are thankful to God for the goodness He has shown us, for the blessings of health and home, of friends and country. Our religion is most elevating, our history is most ennobling. Both of them ~~have claims upon us which~~ demand our constant respect. To our religion may we remain steadfast, to our history may we remain true, by carrying on the work for which our fathers so nobly struggled, suffering death rather than be deserters, ~~and torture rather than be traitors~~. Memories sad and sweet, ~~tearful and joyful~~, does this evening awaken. But it likewise arouses hopes fair and bright ~~as the light of a morning without clouds~~. To these memories and hopes I pledge this glass of wine, and as it passes from lip to lip, may there go with it the loving promise to live for the faith of our fathers and to strive for it bravely, until victory crowns our efforts with success and all men unite with us in proclaiming the Oneness of God, and the Unity of the Human Family. Amen.

(The glass of wine shall then be passed around to all present.)

CHILD.

Why do we observe this service in our home to-night? Why do we observe customs which differ so much from those we follow on any other evening in the year? What is the meaning of the flag and the flowers, the unleavened bread, the wine and these lights? Why is this holiday so important that we should celebrate it in so marked a manner?

READER.

Because, at this season of the year our ancestors, who were made slaves in the land of Egypt, struggled bravely for freedom, and under the guidance of the great prophet, Moses, gained their liberty. This important event is said to have occurred on an evening in the spring month when the moon was full; that is, this very night. We can then understand why the Scriptures, attributing the whole deliverance of our fathers from Egyptian bondage to Almighty God, should say, (Exodus XII., 42), "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord, to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations."

Only a handful of slaves were released, but every civilized nation has been affected by the event. Only a small shepherd tribe was liberated four thousand years ago from the brickfields along the Nile, yet the mightiest peoples have felt the influence of that occurrence. It is

true that only our early forefathers were redeemed from bondage; yet, such is our sympathy with the great memories of the past, that, on such a night as this we feel ourselves under the charm of the event as though we ourselves had been brought out of an Egypt. For the history of our religion and people is full of events similar to that which we so happily celebrate tonight.

CHILD.

Will you tell us that history in a few words?

READER.

The founder of our religion came from the far east, Abraham, who lived among the Chaldeans, seemed to understand that the worship of an unseen God was better than bowing before idols, and that religion should be a blessing and not a curse. He felt himself called upon to oppose the religion of his day, to establish the belief in one God, "the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth," and to go out to the world and teach his belief. Thus with Abraham began the history of our religion and its followers, and from his day to ours we have felt it to be our highest privilege to enjoy the mission of Israel, "through whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."

Our early fathers were shepherds, wandering from place to place, as the desert tribes do to this day. Isaac and Jacob handed down the traditions of Abraham to

their descendants, who, through the influence of Joseph, had settled in the land of Goshen, in Egypt. Here seventy Hebrew souls flourished and prospered and grew into a powerful people. But as soon as they became powerful they gained the enmity of the rulers of Egypt, who determined to crush them by unheard-of cruelty. The Pharaohs made slaves of the Israelites and treated them with great brutality. They were to labor without hope of reward, to toil without opportunity for rest. They built treasure-cities for Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, and were compelled to make their own bricks. This persecution was carried on for many years, when the greatest man in the history of Israel, if not of the world, Moses, was sent by God to release his enslaved brethren. Appearing before Pharaoh, he read the first "Declaration of Independence" and demanded the release of Israel, who should "serve God" and not be slaves to man. The appeal was disregarded, and only after continued persuasion, only after many misfortunes befell the Egyptians did the hardhearted monarch consent to the release of Israel. No sooner did the King let the people go than he regretted his act and pursued after them to bring them back. The people of Israel were encamped by the Red Sea when they saw the Egyptians following them. By a happy coincidence Moses led his people so that they might pass over to the other shore, but the Egyptians perished in the waves of the sea. Moses now led the people through the desert of Arabia, and a few

weeks later gave them, at Sinai, the first laws that were to govern them, and afterwards, to rule the world. It was the plan of Moses to take his people to the land of Palestine and to divide up the land among the various tribes. He, however, died on the border of the Promised Land on Mount Nebo, and Joshua succeeded him and carried on his work.

CHILD.

What became of the people after the death of Moses?

READER.

For a few hundred years the Israelites lived in Palestine under a republican form of government. Finally they adopted the custom of the surrounding nations and elected Saul as king. He was succeeded by David, Solomon and Rehoboam. It was under this last king that the nation became divided into the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Once divided, the nation became a prey to the surrounding warlike peoples. Assyria and Babylon led the nation captive. After seventy years spent in the gloom of exile they returned to Palestine and re-established their Temple and their religion. Brief was their joy, for Syria soon attempted the overthrow of the Jews and their religion. The brave Maccabees delivered their country from the enemy in so courageous a manner that, to this day, the whole world admires and honors them. Finally Rome attacked Jerusalem, and against such odds

the Jews could not endure. Jerusalem and Judea fell before the legions of Rome, the Jews were exiled and despoiled. From the fall of Jerusalem until this day the fate of the Jewish people has not been one of unmixed happiness. Still, they have clung to the belief that their religion shall yet become a blessing unto the whole world.

CHILD.

Since Rome conquered the Jews, what has happened to our people?

READER.

It is over eighteen hundred years since Rome took hundreds of thousands of Jews captive. When other people have lost their country and been driven from it, they have usually disappeared. Not so the Jews. They lived on. They had work to do for God. They had a mission to fulfill. Like the great men and women who have been prophets to the human family, the Jews have, nearly everywhere, been treated badly. Only within the last hundred years have the Jews been granted equal rights with other people, but in most countries, to this day, our brethren are still in an Egyptian bondage.

CHILD.

Why should our brethren have been made to suffer so much?

READER.

The world differs from us in its beliefs and, in former days, people were very unkind to those who had a different religion. We teach that God is One, that He is not made up of parts, that He never took the form of man, that He did not have one, only son, but that all men are His children. We also have many other beliefs which differ from those dear to other people. For example; we teach that the Messiah is yet to come; others believe that the Messiah has come. Because of our difference of religious belief, in former days, many falsehoods were spread about us, many errors were made about us; people disliked the Jews, often hated them, and in nearly every land, treated them with great unkindness, injustice and cruelty.

CHILD.

Did this treatment make the Jews lose faith in their religion or in God?

READER.

No, for they have clung to their God and faith at all times. Some few have been weak and given up their duty; but by far the greatest number have been true to the mission of Israel.

CHILD.

What is "the mission of Israel" of which we hear so often?

READER.

A mission means "a business or service on which someone is sent." In a religious sense it means our duty to live by our beliefs, so that, by our example, others may learn to respect them and, in the end, accept them. The Jewish people, who are often called "Israel" in the Bible, have certain religious teachings. We believe that they are altogether true. We also believe that they are necessary to the happiness of mankind. We feel that without these teachings mankind will not progress as they should. Such teachings include "The belief in One, Only God; the duty of leading a clean, pure, moral life; the future coming of the Messiah." We are told in Scripture that through the people of Israel, and their teachings, "all the nations of the earth are to be blessed." We hold to our faith in the hope that it will, sooner or later, bring blessing to all men. To be true Jews is our religious "business;" to live true to the laws of the One, Only God, is the "service" we are to do for all people. Many smile at such an idea. Some say the Jews are too few to do this. Others say that the Jewish religion belongs to the dead past. Still others say that the world will never accept our religious principles. We say that "God's ways are not man's ways, and God's thoughts are not man's thoughts; but God's ways and thoughts are as high above man's as are the heavens above the earth." The truth is the truth, no matter what people say. The truth may not be accepted now, but it, some

day, will be. It is our glorious duty to teach the truth of our religion, to "witness for the truth," to live for it, knowing that, in the end, the truth is mighty and all men must accept it.

CHILD.

Will that time ever come?

READER.

We hope and pray and believe that it will. The leaven of sin and cruelty will be removed from among men and the pure, unleavened bread of truth and love, of which the Passover bread is a symbol, will be the spiritual food of all people. Some day peace will prevail, knowledge will be spread everywhere, justice will be done and only the language of love will be spoken. Some day "swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation and war will be learned no more." Some day the music of good-will will be sung over all the earth and God will be acknowledged the only King by all men, who will call Him "The One" and proclaim His name as "The One and Only, Eternal God." For that day we live; for that day we serve God and man by being faithful to the religion of Israel.

(Here each shall be served with a portion of Bitter Herbs and 'Haroseth, as a token of the bitter experiences of the past and of the sweet hopes of the future.)

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

(To be read alternately by Reader and the assembled company.)

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say,

Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us,

Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our souls.

It shall come to pass in the fullness of time that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains.

It shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many nations will go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the house of God.

He will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths.

Nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen.

That ye may know that I am He. Before me there was no God neither shall there be after me.

When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.

When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Fear not; for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters and drink.

I, the Lord, will pour water upon him that thirsteth for me.

(Reader raises the glass of wine which has been placed in the center of the table and replaces it after reciting the following:)

I raise this wine to the sentiment, "Our history and our hope, our religion and our mission." Our fathers loved them, lived for them and died for them. They

sowed in tears, they went forth weeping bearing the precious seed of truth, that future generations might reap in joy. We, children of heroes and martyrs, pledge ourselves to them in sincerity and truth. Of our fathers we may say, their love was strong as death. Many waters could not quench their zeal, nor could the fires consume their devotion to God: even though the world offered all it had for them to leave their religion and their mission, it was utterly contemned.

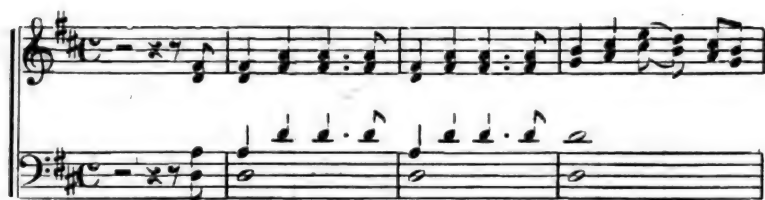
We, too, will act in the spirit of our sires. We will consider no sacrifice too great, no duty too difficult, no labor too arduous to honor our religion, and to carry on the blessed mission of Israel that is to introduce the world's Passover, when all men shall be brought out of the Egypt of narrowness and bigotry, when all men shall be liberated from the oppression of ignorance, when all hatred and uncharitableness shall be engulfed in the Red Sea of oblivion, and the ransomed hosts of humanity shall sing a new song of peace and love and goodwill for all.

All drink of the second glass of wine and then join in singing the hymn on the following page.

ISRAEL'S CALLING.

Anon.

Traditional Melody.



ISRAEL'S CALLING.

Let Israel trust in God alone,
And in His power confide,
For He is faithful to His word,
If we in Him abide;
His councils must forever stand;
All nations bow to His command.

Let Israel strive for truth alone,
In love to bless mankind,
And in the bonds of brotherhood
All nations soon to bind,
So that they all with one accord
Acknowledge and obey the Lord.

CHILD.

What further meaning has the Passover besides this duty of remaining true to our religion and its mission?

READER.

We must not consider the Passover by itself alone. When the people of Israel left Egypt their history as a nation began. We do not keep this feast simply because it is the birthday of the ancient Jewish nation. Our chief reason for keeping the Passover is to be found in the fact that on the day on which Israel left Egypt, "Liberty," was born. The sacred light of "Freedom" was then kindled and, with God's help, it shall never go out.

CHILD.

How did Israel's liberty influence the world?

READER.

Through the greatest event in all history, which took place a few weeks after Israel left Egypt, and which would have been impossible if our fathers had not been delivered from Egyptian bondage.

CHILD.

To what event do you refer?

READER.

To the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. Taken together, the Exodus from Egypt and the

Law given at Sinai, make of Israel possibly the greatest blessing to all men. Passover gave the Jew life and liberty; Sinai gave him law and education. Life without education is like a gem without a setting, a body without a soul, a flower without perfume. Liberty without law is much the same. The Jew taught that man was born to be free and that the greatest freedom was possible only where man respected the law. This view of "liberty under law" took its rise in Israel and every nation which now possesses the blessings of liberty is in debt to Israel for this idea. The Jewish view of "Liberty" has been beautifully sung by the poet, whose words one of you will now read.

TRUE FREEDOM.

(To be read by one of the children.)

Men! whose boast it is, that ye
Come of fathers, brave and free,
If there breathe on earth a slave,
Are ye truly free and brave?
If ye do not feel the chain
When it works a brother's pain,
Are ye not base slaves, indeed,
Slaves unworthy to be freed?

Is true freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake,
And with heathen hearts forget
That we owe mankind a debt?

No! true freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And with heart and hand to be
Earnest to make others free!

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the meek;
They are slaves, who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves, who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

CHILD.

Is it not true that others, besides Israel, struggled for liberty?

READER.

Certainly; most nations have battled for freedom. Thousands upon thousands have struggled and fought and died in the service of liberty. Thousands upon thousands have battled for equity and civil rights. Is not this the very soul of our "Declaration of Independence"? Was it not thus that Cromwell and Hampden, Washington and Jefferson strove? Was it not for this cause that the Pilgrim Fathers left Europe and came to this beloved

land? Through whose example were they led to do these things? Through that of the men whose lives they studied. Who were these men? Chiefly Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea and other great men in Israel. Where did they read about them? In a book they opened at dawn and closed only when they went to rest at night. What was that book? The Bible. What made it possible for us to have a Bible? The departure of our ancestors from Egypt. Had Pharaoh's plan succeeded, had all the male children in Israel been cast into the Nile, Sinai would not have become famous, there would have been no prophets, no Maccabees, none of Israel's great and worthy exemplars. The Exodus was the beginning of a series of events which led to the writing of the Bible, which all the greatest nations respect as the greatest work ever written by the hand of man.

CHILD.

Do we still regard the Bible very highly?

READER.

So much do we prize it that we compare it to the bright light which means so much to all who live on earth. Therefore we place these lights on this table to-night as a symbol and a token of the value of the Bible, which our great Rabbis have compared to the light which brightens, cheers, gives life and removes darkness. It

has been well said of the Bible: Nature has produced many mountain-peaks, there is only one Everest. She has given many rivers; there is but one Amazon. Many countries have produced grand sculptors; there is only one Angelo. Many countries have evolved noble systems of religion; there is only one Palestine. Many nations have given to the world great dramatists; there is but one Shakespeare. Many peoples have given grand collections of national literature; there is only one Bible. "Ponder on it; dig deep into it"; teach the Rabbis, "for everything is in it." All whose souls have thirsted for truth as the hart pants for the water-brooks, have been able to drink from its water and satisfy their longings. How beautiful are those words of Whittier concerning it:

"We search the world for truth; we cull
The good, the pure, the beautiful
From graven scroll and written stone,
From the old flower-fields of the soul;
And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the book our mothers read."

CHILD.

What other form of liberty do we learn to cherish from the teachings of Passover?

READER.

Religious liberty. This is the third of the great forms of freedom in which men rejoice, civil liberty and political liberty being the other two. Moses demanded of Pharaoh not only "to let Israel go," but that they should also "serve God." Different people have different ideas of God and of the manner in which He can best be served. It is man's right to serve God as he sees fit, so long as he does not interfere with the equal right of his neighbor. To enjoy religious liberty means that men should be permitted to observe the principles of their religion without interference by others. This right has not been gained without a great struggle, and even to-day many millions do not yet possess it.

CHILD.

Where do we find civil, political and religious liberty united to-day?

READER.

Here in America. The fathers of this country fought against oppression that here all men should be free and equal before the law; free to worship God as their conscience dictated. To us the United States of America stands as the foremost among nations granting the greatest liberty to all who dwell here. Therefore we grace our table with our National flag. That flag stands for "equal liberty for all men. It means equal rights for all.

It means free hands, free lips, self-government. It means universal education, light for every mind, knowledge for every child. It means that the school-house is the bulwark of liberty. It means that 'governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.' It means that 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.' It means that every citizen of this Republic must be protected. It means that all distinctions based on birth or blood have perished from our laws and that the government shall give and guarantee simple justice to each and all. It means that there shall be a legal remedy for every wrong. It is an emblem of hospitality—that we must welcome to our shores the exiles of the world, and that we may not drive them back. Some may be deformed by labor, dwarfed by hunger, broken in spirit, victims of tyranny, in whose sad faces may be read the touching record of a weary life, and yet their children, born of liberty and love, will be fair, intelligent and free. That flag is a symbol of a supreme will—of a nation's power. Beneath its folds the weakest must be protected, and the strongest must obey." It is not surprising that we love this country so dearly. America is the child of the Old Testament. It is the "Moses and the Prophets" of modern times. Twice in her history was she inspired by their daring, brilliant, philanthropic example; once when they showed the world how to struggle for liberty and again when they established a republic that secured equal rights for all.

The Pilgrim Fathers landed here inspired by Israel's wanderings to go out even to the wilderness and worship God. The immortal Declaration of Independence is the Great Charter announced before Pharaoh by Moses. The Abolitionists are the product of the Bible, and the love of civil liberty that moved Channing and Parker, Whittier and Lloyd Garrison was nourished by it. The Old Testament first taught men that Government must be a government by law, equally applicable to all and this is the controlling idea of Mosaic and American legislation. The Fourth of July is the American Passover. Thanksgiving day is the American Feast of Tabernacles.

It is therefore quite in keeping with the service this evening to pledge our country. In raising this third glass of wine to our lips let us pray that God will ever protect our land, that here liberty may forever dwell, that peace may abide within her borders and prosperity within her homes.

(The third glass of wine is drunk, after which the following passages are repeated alternately by Reader and the assembled company.)

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments that ye shall do.

What nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law.

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.

Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

For this land is not like the land of Egypt, but floweth with milk and honey.

It is a land which the Lord thy God careth for; His eyes are upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year.

‘I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, for a covenant of the people, for a light to the nations.

To open the blind eyes; to bring out the prisoners from the prisons, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why should we deal treacherously with one another?

What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk in humility!

Wash ye, make you clean; cease to do wrong; learn to do well; put away all evil doing from you.

Seek justice. relieve the oppressed. judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil, in that I command thee to love the Lord.

I call heaven and earth to witness that I have set before thee life and death, blessing and curse; and thou shalt choose life.

Ye shall do no unrighteousness in justice; ye shall not deal falsely one with the other.

Ye shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against each other, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

(The whole company shall then sing the following hymn.)

AMERICA.

My country 'tis of Thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrim's pride,
From ev'ry mountain side
Let freedom ring.

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,
 Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills
 Like that above.



Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
 Sweet freedom's song:
Let mortal tongues awake,
Let all that breathe partake,
Let rocks their silence break,
 The sound prolong.

Our fathers' God to Thee,
Author of liberty,
 To Thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
 Great God, our King.

CHILD.

Should we not feel happy because of the remarkable services Israel has rendered to the world, and that we here enjoy the fruits of liberty?

READER.

We cannot sufficiently express our gratitude to Almighty God for the wonderful preservation of Israel, nor to our heroes and heroines of the past who have so faithfully striven for the good of mankind. Nations, mighty and powerful, who sought our harm, are dead and their gods are fallen. Israel still lives and the God we worship is the God of humanity. Our belief is time-worn, but time-honored. Age that weakens everything else has only strengthened the truths Israel has given. To an unwilling world we have taught the sublimest lessons, and though the debt has not always been acknowledged, it will yet be paid. As our ancestors expressed their gratitude in hymns of praise, so may we now repeat their words.

HALLEL.

(To be read alternately by Reader and the assembled company.)

Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore.

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised.

The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob
from a people of strange language ;

Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.

The sea saw it, and fled ; Jordan was driven back.

*The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills
like lambs.*

Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at
the presence of the God of Jacob.

*Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint
into a fountain of water.*

Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul.
While I live I will praise the Lord.

*Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary ;
praise him in the firmament of his power.*

Praise him for his mighty acts ; praise him according
to his excellent greatness.

*Praise him with the sound of the trumpet ; praise him
with the psaltery and harp.*

Praise him with the timbrel and dance ; praise him
with stringed instruments and organs.

*Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise
ye the Lord.*

(The fourth glass of wine is now drunk.)

CHILD.

Was not the Passover originally an agricultural festival?

READER.

There is no doubt but that from the earliest times men have held festivals in praise of their God as the seasons of the year have changed. It is well known that long before the Exodus the Egyptians held a spring festival. In the Scriptures we read that one of the important features of the celebration of the Passover was the offering of the first ripe sheaves of barley. It was natural that when the winter was over and the flowers appeared upon the earth, when the dove's voice was again heard and the fig and vine began to grow that men should pour forth their hearts in gratitude for the joys and beauties of Spring.

CHILD.

Did it have no further meaning?

READER.

Yes; it brought to men the hope of life after death, symbolized by the flowers upon this table. Man saw the flower fade and die and when spring returned, he saw it blossom again; and so he dreamed of a time when, after his death, he too would blossom forth and live again. The spring is the first teacher of this belief.

Ages and ages before any church was known, spring had uttered this truth most beautifully. In every blade of grass that sought to bathe itself in the sunshine or drink in the dew, in every tiny bud that burst its envelope, she uttered it. And as it was with nature, so man thought concerning himself. There would be an awakening, after the winter of death. And this thought seems to have been the meaning of that vision described with so much force by the great prophet Ezekiel, and which is one of the Scripture readings selected for the Passover. (Ezekiel, Chapter 37.)

CHILD.

Will you tell us a few words about this belief?

READER.

The hope of a future life is as old as the human heart. Some think it arose in the dreams that people had of their dead loved ones. During the dreams of the night, man clasped the darling one again to his heart. Their lips met in the kiss of love, and again in his dreams he heard the voice that spoke so sweetly in life. In the morning, on awaking, he believed he had actually met the dead one, who was not really dead, but only removed from sight. Not content with this, man sought the teachings of Nature. He saw that after winter's death came spring's young life. He saw how the little beetle crept into a self-made grave in winter and came out in

the spring young and strong; therefore, he hung a scarab in his temples as an emblem of the immortal life. He saw how the homely worm lay itself down, spun its silken shrouds, from which it soon released itself as a beautiful butterfly. Therefore he thought of a time when he would break through the shrouds of death and arise in a new form, for a new life in a land where there would be no more death. The hope of living "in the likeness of God," after we die on earth, is held by most people as the source of our greatest comfort and is cherished by all religions as the great consolation in the hour of trial and trouble.

CHILD.

Is there any other form of immortality of which we can speak?

READER.

Yes; not only do we believe that our dear ones continue to live after death, but the influence of our example remains even when we are gone. We act to-day, but, long afterwards, our act brings shame or honor to us. The good we do lives after us, so does the bad. The resurrection we observe in every plant and tree may be true of every life; it is also true of every act we perform. It lives and lives forever and forever. It depends on ourselves whether we write our names on shifting sand or on imperishable rock. Truth, honor,

honesty, cleanness of hands and purity of heart, wherever practiced, will gain for us an immortal influence here on earth, just as beyond the grave there is life forever with God.

Our dead do not die, until we kill them by forgetfulness. They live on in us and through us, even as we shall through our children. The continuous chain of good and evil knows no break. The immortal influence of example knows no interruption. The past is linked to the present; the future is prepared to-day. In this sense our loved ones never die, for they live in hearts and lives left behind. In moments of sacred joy, in hours of hallowed sorrow they beckon us on to love and duty. In times of trial and temptation, of success and failure, they stand out before our mind's eye. Once again we feel the pressure of the hand that gave childhood's blessing; once again their lips meet ours in the kiss of hope; once again we hear their voices uttering words of counsel or comfort; and by the purity of our lives, by the nobility of our deeds, by the honesty of our acts, we prove that, although our loved ones are dead, they still live.

IMMORTALITY.

(To be read by one of the children.)

For me—to have made one soul
The better for my birth:
To have added but one flower
To the garden of the earth;
To have struck one blow for truth
In the daily fight with lies:
To have done one deed of right
In the face of calumnies:
To have sown in the souls of men
One thought that will not die—
To have been a link in the chain of life;
Shall be immortality.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

(To be read alternately by Reader and the assembled company.)

For, lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the dove is heard in our land;

The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

For thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.

Riches profit not in the day of wrath; but righteousness delivereth from death.

CLOSING PRAYER.

READER.

Almighty God! We have come to Thee this night with the burden of our hopes and joys. We have laid upon the altar of our faith an act of devotion that cannot enrich Thee, but which may make us the wealthier and the happier. We have rehearsed what our fathers have done, not in a spirit of boastfulness and vainglory, but that we may become strengthened by their example, that we learn to do what they have done. As they went through the world preaching the gospel of liberty and love so shall we. As they remained true and steadfast so shall we, with Thy help, O God.

We thank Thee for an ancestry that we may pattern after. May we resolve to imitate our fathers. May we devote our life to the study of Thy word, given to us in Nature and in the Holy Books of men. May we resolve to fulfill the law of love, to cheer the sorrowing, to sustain the failing, to help the poor and suffering, to plead the cause of the widow and the orphan,

to inveigh against all intolerance and bigotry and to become the champions of liberty. May we feel that the story of liberty is not complete until the minds of men are free from ignorance and superstition, from error and blind belief. May we remove from our hearts the leaven of sin and unbelief, and may our purified souls worship Thee alone.

We renew to-night the spiritual covenant of the Passover and we shall toil and labor for every cause that may bring about the universal Passover, when all men shall be free, when all men shall be happy, when all men shall pass over into the promised land of knowledge and happiness, of truth and the fear of God. We thank Thee for the hope that the spring season teaches us that there is no death. May we learn to profit by this lesson. May we employ our days on earth wisely, devoting ourselves to all causes that tend to better the conditions of our fellow-men. Loving one another, aiding one another, and trusting faithfully in Thee, may we peacefully spend our days on earth and look forward fearlessly to the eternal beyond. May we live so that we shall be loved living and regretted dead. May our life here insure for us blessed immortality, and when the time shall come for us to return unto Thee, may we commit our spirit to Thy keeping, repeating the watchword that has been our inspiration through all the various circumstances of life: "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal is our God; the Eternal is One. Amen."

(The evening meal should now be served.)